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tion is regularly given. It would be impermissible to insist upon occasional asperities or oddities of opinion, or even upon the pervading tone of almost bitter self-criticism, as characteristic traits of the autobiography, were it not that the story as a whole is so vital and genuine that its defects are to be accounted as virtues.

One does not, of course, read this narrative merely as a character study: the story possesses much objective interest and charm. The earlier chapters have somewhat the fascination of the best of novels of the modern school—the school which joins keen interest in life as an adventure to the lucidity of realism and of an emancipated point of view. Some of the later chapters are memorable in a way that the fictional comparison cannot suggest. Especially to be valued is the chapter entitled “Washington, 1861,” with its strong impression of the feeling of the time and its familiar, penetrating views of notable men—rather especially, of Seward and Sumner. Seldom are historic mists so effectually pierced.

Frankness, sincerity: these are inadequate words to designate the quality of this autobiography of Charles Francis Adams. The story vibrates to the note of reality—the reality of intense life and conviction.

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THE MEANING OF PERSONAL LIFE. By Newman Smyth. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916.

There is a marked difference between Mr. Smyth's approach to his subject and that of writers who have handled the same problem within contemporary memory. Gone are the old sweeping arguments from analogy; gone is the self-assurance of the writer untrained in scientific thought who jauntily set out to “reconcile science with religion.” Conspicuously absent, too, is the wistful pessimism of a Mallock or the rigorous skepticism of a Shaler. The truth is that while science has pretty successfully imposed its method and viewpoint upon all modes of thought, it has itself become less dogmatic than formerly; it leaves openings through which religious thought may pass to freedom. Into such openings as are afforded by William James, Bergson, and the biologists, Mr. Smyth eagerly presses. His book is, so to speak, an extract of all that is most hopeful, from the spiritual point of view, in the writings of modern scientists and philosophers. All who dabble in modern philosophy and science have felt a certain change in the scientific spirit. James did much; other philosophers, though disagreeing among themselves, have urged on the newer tendency; even psychic research has had its influence: the sheer inertia of materialism has been overcome; scientific pessimism has gone rather out of fashion.

Mr. Smyth's treatise is an attempt to systematize the newer tendencies of thought in a manner sufficiently thorough to do full justice to scientific facts and yet untechnical enough to make the

way easy for the general readers. The method employed is that of scientific inquiry—the method which the special sciences have imposed upon philosophy. Instead of ostentatiously assembling “evidences,” the author searches humbly for meanings; he seeks to discover the tendency, the general direction, and hence the destination of life, after the modern method; he would faithfully follow the facts as far as they light the path, and then with some confidence take a leap into the dark.

It cannot be said that this mode of procedure as carried out by Mr. Smyth is wholly satisfactory. To begin with, the author is not very successful in avoiding the twin dangers of superficial generalization and excessive scientific detail. On the whole, there is in his work rather more detail than penetration. Then, too, Mr. Smyth appears to be not especially blessed with the Jamesian gifts of suggestive phrasing and clear, incisive summary. Thus the reader is sometimes left in no small doubt as to whether the discussion of a particular class of facts has materially advanced to argument, or whether the advance actually achieved is really dependent upon the preliminary criticism of materials. Furthermore, as a philosophic thinker the author is hardly critical enough to be clear. He draws, for example, upon Bergson's vitalism, upon James's pragmatism, upon Clifford's peculiar form of idealism, without making it quite plain how much of these systems of thought we may safely accept, or precisely where lies their common ground. Something of the same unsureness of touch is felt in dealing with the teleological argument. Apparently his method does not include a search for *design*, or purpose, in the universe; he looks merely for *meanings*. Yet the distinction is rather a fine one: the reader feels that the meaning of the word *meaning* itself needs to be more carefully defined, and distinguished if possible from that of the kindred words *design* and *purpose*. Finally, despite the method of scientific inquiry which he employs, Mr. Smyth visibly has a hard struggle to prevent his work from turning wholly into a work of edification. Edifying the chapters upon “The Fulfilment of Personal Life in Jesus Christ” and “The Creative Spirit of Christianity” surely are; and for these the preceding chapters in a measure clear the way, if they do little more.

Even as philosophic exposition in the stricter sense, Mr. Smyth's treatise is worth while. To be sure, what may be learned from modern analyses of memory or of the phenomena of aphasia, or what may be gained by attempting to take a leaf out of Bergson's book without accepting Bergson *in toto*, is on the whole rather little. Nevertheless, the author does fairly achieve two worthy ends. First, he demonstrates the inadequacy of materialism. At no point in the series of life-development is materialism a sufficient hypothesis; psycho-physical parallelism is merely a working theory; spiritualism is an allowable if not the necessary alternative. Secondly, Mr. Smyth makes credible the essential reality of the personal self. Once the

self has been taken apart in thought, he points out, it is difficult to put it together again; yet it has never been really taken apart. Its assertion of reality and of its own worth cannot be mechanistically explained.

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GERMANY VS. CIVILIZATION. By William Roscoe Thayer. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

Of American books about the war, this of Mr. Thayer's is perhaps the most genuinely unpassioned and the most effectively rhetorical that has been written. Mr. Thayer, who recently gave us *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, is notable among American prose writers for the clarity and grace and the sinewy strength of his style. As a biographer he has shown himself capable of fine sympathy and judicious interpretation. One expects much of Mr. Thayer; but unfortunately it cannot be said that his book, *Germany vs. Civilization*, is in any respect a valuable contribution to the subject which forms its theme.

The defect is not merely that Mr. Thayer has nothing new to offer in the way of explanation or philosophic forecast. There is, besides, a certain superficiality of thought throughout the book, and a tendency toward sweeping generalization. The very questionable view that the behavior of the German people in relation to the present war is explicable on the ground of inherited savagery is urged with unjustifiable sureness and unnecessary bitterness. The effect upon the German mind of the recent German philosophers and pseudo-philosophers—Nietzsche, Treitschke, Bernhardi and the rest—is emphasized beyond critical moderation. The general impression left is that the creed of Kultur is not merely an influence, of such weight, say, as the philosophic element in the French Revolution, but a sort of yellow streak that runs from top to bottom of German society. The author's denunciation of the Kaiser gives an impression of that potentate as such a demon *ex machina* as perhaps never was or can be. It seems unhistorical in temper, and even a little childish.

Mr. Thayer's book is chiefly an appeal to feeling. In estimating such a book one perhaps ought not to apply too strictly mere scholarly standards of criticism. But the question may be asked: Just what good end can be accomplished by such an appeal at such a time? Americans, it may be supposed, have pretty generally made up their minds as to the right and wrong of the present war. Indignation, presumably, has passed into sober conviction.

A certain degree of violence of expression may no doubt be forgiven a man whose heart is generously stirred by reports of German iniquities in Belgium. These things are bad enough, some of us think. No true American can regard without detestation the German policy of frightfulness. We are, most of us, "human, all too